

ALPHADELPHIA ASSOCIATION
(--COMSTOCK (MICH.)

" ALPHADELPHIA "

Very popular around 1840 was the idea of families buying land and living together. Some of the people would farm, others would do all the cooking, others would do the washings and ironings, others would work in the sawmill; all things would be done together and for each other.

Such a community was started on Toland Prairie where the Kalamazoo County Farm is located today. People in the Comstock and Galesburg area started the group known as the Alphadelphian Association and sold stock for \$50.00 a share. They bought over 1,000 acres on Paragon Prairie beside the Kalamazoo River. On this level, rich farmland they built a common house, a sawmill, a flour mill, a general store, a schoolhouse, a church building and a printing office.

The first meeting for the Alphadelphian Association was held in 1844 and by 1845 there were 188 members. But by April, 1846, the last member had left and the land and property was sold to the Kalamazoo County Board of Supervisors. It was then used as the Poor Farm for Kalamazoo County.

No one ever really knew what went wrong with this socialistic group called the Alphadelphians. But rumor quoted some of the members as complaining that some members were lazy and wouldn't do their fair share of the work. Others complained that while they put in a great deal more money than the others, they still worked as hard or harder than those who put in very little money. So it would seem that jealousy and bickering was probably the cause of the eventual end of the Alphadelphian Association in Comstock Township.

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Alphadelphia Association

This website hosts a database I've put together of members of the Alphadelphia Association and documents on the Association. The Alphadelphia Association was a 19th century utopian community to which my Noyes family belonged. The database contains recorded members. If your family was involved in the Alphadelphia Association please consider contributing your data and family information as most has been lost.

Access the Alphadelphia database [here](#).

Individuals in database

The society at its peak had 188 recorded members on the domain and has been reported by prior researchers to have had perhaps more than 300 including those living off site, but on May 20th, 1844, H. R. Schetterly reported to "The Phalanx" that the Association had "upwards of 1300 members" and had rejected one hundred "because there seemed to be no end, and we became almost frightened at the number." For member sources I am going by a list of Shareholders provided to a Catherine Livingston, by the U. of Michigan, back in the late 50s, a list of holders of canceled certificates, and mentions in various articles of other participating individuals. The database I've compiled falls short of the number of members Alphadelphia had at its peak. Census records and other records at the U. of Michigan which would augment the list are not at my disposal.

The database is an outgrowth of research on the Noyes family and knowledge that James Allen Noyes, son of James Noyes (a president at Alphadelphia), participated in some other communes of the day after Alphadelphia folded. James Noyes of the Alphadelphia Association was distantly related to John Humphrey Noyes, of Oneida fame. John Humphrey Noyes' sister, Elizabeth, married to Fletcher Farnsworth Ransom, moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan and her brother-in-law, Roswell Ransom, was a member of the Alphadelphia Society. Oral family history has James Allen Noyes, James Noyes's son, traveling at least to Oneida. He also participated in the Berlin Heights Community where he apparently met his wife. Records also give him as perhaps participating in a phalanx in Wisconsin. A dated document shows him in Lagrange, Indiana, site of yet another phalanx. A page remaining from an address book is our only documentation of a connection with Berlin Heights, nearly all the papers in a trunk holding documents concerning the family's association with Alphadelphia and other communes destroyed during the McCarthy years.

It would be interesting to know more about cross-fertilization between communes, following members' movements (especially with their closing), and how many members of folded communes, such as the family of James Allen Noyes, may have eventually moved to Liberal, Missouri in the 1880s, given as the only "free thinkers" community in the United States, founded by George Walser. That being beyond me, I am endeavoring to come up with some brief gene background on different Alphadelphia members so that we may know a little more about these individuals. I do not in this database replicate the Noyes genealogy and associated families.

Alphadelphia Background and Articles on hand

An experiment in Fourierism, the Alphadelphia Association, was also known early on as the Washtenaw Phalenx.

The first convention of the Alphadelphia Association was called 14 December 1843, their first meeting on their domain held 21 March 1844. The Association's last journal entry was 30 April 1848, and a meeting was held 1 August 1848 for the purpose of disposing of the deeds of the members in attendance. Presidents from 1844 to 1848 are given as: Anson DELAMATTER, Benjamin WRIGHT, Harvey KEITH, Lyman TUBBS and James NOYES. But the Association was still to some extent in existence with acting officers afterward as on 11 August 1857 a few members met for the purpose of disposing the books of the Association as the secretary was moving to Kansas. The last acting president was Charles Luke Keith, who was present at that last meeting where was announced, "And thus ended the Alphadelphia Association."

As mentioned above, during the McCarthy years, the Noyes family destroyed documents from the Alphadelphia Association and other materials concerning involvement of family in other utopian communities.

Barbara Triphahn, a descendant of Charles Luke KEITH (also a president of the Alphadelphia Association) responded to a posting of mine on the internet requesting contact with anyone who might have information on the Association. She supplied a number of newspaper articles from the early 1900s and the Alphadelphia Society Constitution.

Also thanks to Nancy BENTON, for a copy of the paper the "Alphadelphia Association" prepared by Catherine Livingston in 1958, whose research was based on documents loaned to her through Mrs. F. J. Buckley of Kalamazoo who had purchased records from Ethan Keith and Hannah Keith Towne.

ARTICLES ON THIS BLOG

Alphadelphia Association, a 1958 Paper by Catherine Livingston

The Alphadelphia Society Constitution

Alphadelphia Shareholders

The Object and Plans of the Alphadelphia Association Feb 5, 1844, Schetterly's letter to the Michigan House of Representatives, Chairman of the Committee on Banks and Incorporations.

"Alphadelphia Association" in the JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN, 1844

Phalanx Article on the formation of the Alphadelphia Association March 1 1844

May 20 1844 Letter from Schetterly to The Phalanx on the Alphadelphia Association's Progress

EDGAR ALLEN POE ON THE ALPHADELPHIA TOCSIN January 18, 1845

Silk at Alphadelphia 1845

Review of the Alphadelphia Tocsin from Volume VIII, December 12, 1845, of "The Star in the West"

Summary Justice-Who Stole the Beef From Volume VIII, December 20, 1845, of "The Star in the West", a story from Alphadelphia's "The Primitive Expounder"

Review of the Primitive Expounder from Volume VIII, December 20, 1845, of "The Star in the West"

"The Primitive Expounder" published out of Alphadelphia by R. Thornton and J. Billings, 1846

The Alphadelphia Association in The People's Journal

The Parting of Ways of "The Primitive Expounder" and the Alphadelphia Association March 1846

The Kalamazoo County Directory on Alphadelphia 1869

AMERICAN SOCIALISMS by John Humphrey Noyes in which is mentioned the Alphadelphia Association as the Washtenaw Phalanx, and the Lagrange Indiana community to which James Allan Noyes went after the collapse of the Alphadelphia Association—as well did H. R. Schetterly, the founder of the A.A.

The Alphadelphia Association, from a History of Kalamazoo Co., MI by Everts and Abbott, published 1880.

Samuel Durant on the Primitive Expounder

Mention of the Alphadelphia Tocsin in an 1881 history of Washtenaw

The Alphadelphia Association interesting 1884 article by A. D. P. Van Buren in "Pioneer Collections" Volume 5, Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan

Farm Society Sought Utopia in 1844; Lasted Four Years, Kalamazoo Gazette, October 18, 1925

WHY GALESBURG WAS MADE ALPHADELPHIA SOCIETY HOME, Kalamazoo Gazette, Jan. 14, 1937

DEATH OF E. B. KEITH IN 1934 REVEALS SOCIETY'S RECORDS, Kalamazoo Gazette, Jan. 24, 1937

SOCIETY PLANNED PUBLIC LIBRARY AND A SEMINARY, Kalamazoo Gazette, Jan. 24, 1937.

COLONY LISTED 188 RESIDENTS IN MAY OF 1845, Kalamazoo Gazette, Jan. 24, 1937.

Paper Gives Details of Old Society, Kalamazoo Gazette, 1962.

James Noyes and Sally Marble, parents of James Allen Noyes who married Caroline Atwell. This James Noyes was a member of the Alphadelphia Association.

Roswell Ransom at Alphadelphia a bio of one of the shareholders

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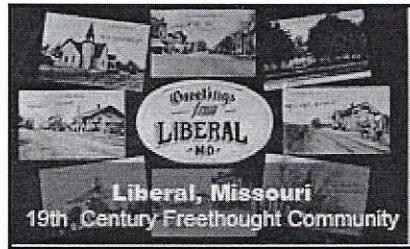
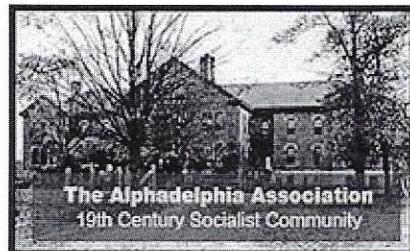
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[The Alphadelphia Association Constitution 1844](#)

[Caroline Atwell Noyes' 1882 Diary of Trip from Anna, Illinois to Liberal, Missouri](#)

[O. E. Harmon's "The Story of Liberal, Missouri"](#) 1925, on the history of the freethought community of Liberal

[Dick and I](#), by Samuel Bartow McKenney, pre 1881, unpublished, freethought novella

[1883 Travel Diary of Charity Alice McKenney Reynolds Barnes](#) from Minnesota to Oregon

[The Memoirs of Nona Strake](#) concerning her childhood in late 19th century Oregon

["Two Years Among the Spirits in the Godless Town of Liberal, the Experience of the Famous Medium, Dr. J. B. Bouton,"](#) by Dr. J. B. Bouton, 1888

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ALPHADELPHIA ASSOCIATION

prepared by

Kim Marie Henson

March 25, 1975

In Memory of Marian Struble Henson
beloved wife, mother and grandmother
who first introduced me to the
mysteries and delights of the past.

My very sincere thanks to Mrs. Louise Struble,
for her guidance and undying patience during
the research phase of the paper, and especially
for her inspirational insistence that this paper
be placed in the Archives, where all may view
it and thereby come closer to their pioneer
heritage.

Kim Marie Henson
September 29, 1979

Outline

Thesis: The Alphadelphia Association was an experiment in communal living, based on high ideals but plagued by human weaknesses.

I. Socialism

- A. Ideals of Fourier
- B. History in United States

II. The Alphadelphia Association is Born

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- E. First Meeting at New Site
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- IV. The Association Prospers
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 - 3. Deserters
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 - C. Records of the Association
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 - 2. A. D. P. Van Buren
- VI. Conclusion: Although the Alphadelphia Association failed, the spirit of the brotherhood still lives on in the communes of today.

In 1844, a group of Michigan pioneers founded the Alphadelphia Association, an early experiment in communal living near Galesburg. Based on the ideas of Francois Charles Marie Fourier, a French utopian socialist, the Association was the first of its kind in the Kalamazoo area. Fourier, born in 1772, believed the social principles of individualism and competition were basically "imperfect and immoral", and that only co-operation could fully develop human nature. He believed free development of human nature and unrestrained indulgence of human passion was the only way to true happiness; that societal restraints against these passions caused misery. According to Fourier's plan, social communities, called phalanges, provided the healthy environment necessary for happiness. These phalanges consisted of 1600 people each, and their main industry was agriculture. The people lived in harmony, none rich and none poor, sharing the profits and losses of the community.

Although no successful phalanges started during Fourier's lifetime, Robert Dale Owen and Albert Brisbane influenced the beginning of at least forty socialist communities in the United States between 1840 and 1850. The Brook Farm experiment in Massachusetts became the most well-known of these; the New Harmony Society in Indiana and the Oneida Colony in New York also developed in the 1840's.

Both Napoleon and Karl Marx based their ideas of social order and communism on the ideals of Fourier.

In Michigan, Dr. H. R. Schetterly and a group of friends met to discuss the development of a socialist community. Called the Bellevue Convention, it met in a one-room schoolhouse at Clark's Lake, Jackson County, Michigan, on December 14, 1843. Those present decided to name themselves the Alphadelphia -- first brotherhood -- Association. They drew up a constitution based on the socialist ideals of Fourier. It included a provision for:

"free schools furnished with suitable apparatus for illustrating the branches taught ... maintained throughout the year, on the principle of uniting¹ labor with study and theory with practice."

It also stated:

"the religious and political opinions of members are to be unmolested and inviolate; and no member shall be compelled to support, in any way, any religious worship."²

A library and seminary were to be set up when sufficient funds were raised. The seminary would instruct in "the Arts and Sciences; particularly Mechanics, Chemistry, Agriculture, and Manufactures".³

¹Mrs. Catherine Livingston, Alphadelphia Association, (1958), abridged from the constitution, Article III, Section 5.

²Ibid., Article III, Section 4.

³Ibid., Article III, Section 6.

To become a member, one had to be of good moral character, twenty-one years of age and have provision for six months or the means to furnish it. A two-thirds vote of the present membership admitted new members. Members could be expelled from the Association if found guilty of misconduct by two-thirds of the resident members. Any member over twenty-one years of age could vote in matters concerning admitting and expelling members, but only male members could vote on other business.

The constitution also provided for "the support of all resident members whose stock is insufficient to support them, in case of sickness or any other cause".⁴ This provision came to be one of the downfalls of the Association.

The fifty-one members, made up of farmers, merchants, manufacturers and heads of families, signed the constitution upon its completion.

Next, a committee selected to survey several possible sites for the new community set out. Dr. Schetterly, newly-elected president of the Association, traveled to the Kalamazoo River Valley, an area suggested by the convention. Here he found rich, fertile land, a wide river, rolling hills, and a fresh spring "pouring out a barrel of water per minute".⁵ Few people died of the fever here; only 2 of 150 had died in seven years.⁶ The Michigan Central

⁴ Livingston, op. cit., Article VI, Section 3.

⁵ A. D. P. Van Buren, History of Kalamazoo, Michigan (Philadelphia: Evarts and Abbot, 1880), 370.

⁶ Ibid., 370.

Railroad would soon run only 1½ miles from the river. Cobblestone and timber were plentiful for constructing buildings. Dr. Schetterly and his committee, highly impressed with the area, recommended it to the convention, and it soon became the home of the Alphadelphia Association.

Dr. Schetterly equally impressed the people of nearby Galesburg. A small, dark man of German ancestry, he spoke enthusiastically of Fourier with great talent and emotion. He pictured a life of "Spartan fidelity and frugality", where there would be no "thine" or "mine", but only "ours".

"He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
The little and the great,
Feels not the want that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
Embittering all his state."⁷

Actually, the ideas Dr. Schetterly impressed the early settlers with were not new to their natures. The pioneers, shrewd and practical, had learned to help and depend on one another to survive their common hardships. They already felt a brotherhood with one another; the Alphadelphia merely gave them the chance to actually live as brothers. In the report by Dr. Schetterly to the convention, he stated "No man must oppose a project so fraught with principles calculated to promote the best interests of mankind."⁸

⁷Van Buren, op. cit., 369.

⁸Ibid., 370.

In April and May of 1844, the trustees signed several deeds, thus acquiring about 3,000 acres of land for the Association.⁹ They sold shares of stock for fifty dollars a share; some members purchased as much as four thousand dollars worth of stock in the Association.

The first meeting of the Alphadelphia Association at its new home on March 21, 1844, met at the home of Harvey Keith, who later sold his land to the Association. The failure to receive a charter for incorporation, refused by the State of Michigan, made necessary articles of agreement, signed by all members. The Articles provided for the sale and transfer of stock, and listed the duties and responsibilities of the trustees. The Alphadelphians decided on a labor code; one-fourth of all profits were to be used for mutual improvements, and the remaining three-fourths would be divided among the members.¹⁰

The Association elected Anson DeLamatter president and Henry R. Reading secretary. No record exists of the first vice-president and treasurer. Benjamin Wright, Harvey Keith, James Noyes and Lyman Tubbs succeeded DeLamatter as president.

Lyman Tubbs was the "patriarchal Abraham" of the brotherhood. Wise, able in speech and clear in his views, he provided the strength and wisdom the Association needed.

⁹ Abstract of Title (Kalamazoo County, Michigan), 3.

¹⁰ Livingston, op. cit., Article III, Section 1.

Fond of changing words to more truly express their meanings, he would say "trikany" instead of "chicanery" and other examples of his talent for mixing wisdom with humor to accent a point.

Those members who lived near the new site remained in their own homes until a phalanstery could be built. Those who came from great distances boarded with the residents of Galesburg and Comstock. Soon the brotherhood erected a long shanty on the north side of the river that sufficed until the mansion was built in the fall of 1844. The mansion measured 20' wide x 200' long x two stories high. The bell that hung in the belfry above the main hall in the mansion was later used by the Galesburg Volunteer Fire Department until the city obtained a siren.

A small log building, constructed on the south side of the river, served as a school. The children rode a ferry across the river to school. James Allen Knight, the first Alphadelphia teacher, enjoyed fiddling in his leisure time, but Mr. Avery, another teacher who roomed next to Mr. Knight, disliked Mr. Knight's fiddling very much. Imagine Mr. Avery's delight when the following poem was published in the colony's newspaper:

"The Fiddler's Lament"

"Oh, Allen! oh, Allen! how you do torture me;
Surely you'll kill me as dead as a stone;
All the while sawing, and rasping, and scraping me,
Surely you'll scrape all the flesh from my bones."¹¹

¹¹Van Buren, op. cit., 371.

Mr. Avery taught a school built later on the north side of the river, which was also taught by Nancy A. Tuttle (who later married Levi S. Blakesley, the printer) and Miss M. Hanchett.

The Association had its own newspaper, the Alphadelphia Toscin. Reverend Richard Thorton, originally from Ann Arbor, continued to publish The Primitive Expounder, a staunch Universalist journal he had published in Ann Arbor. Dr. Schetterly edited the Toscin, and Levi Blakesley and C. W. Sawyer worked the printing presses of both newspapers.

The Universalist faith had the greatest following in the brotherhood, led by Rev. Thorton, J. Billings, and E. Wheeler. All other religions were welcomed, however, and several other faiths were followed by the brothers.

Any disagreement arising among the members resolved itself through arbitration -- mutual agreement of all parties involved. No lawyers lived in the Association.

During the four years of the brotherhood, the colony developed quickly. A mill race was dug, and a sawmill and flourmill were constructed. Besides the large phalanstery, a general store, two schools, a printing office, four houses and various workrooms and dormitories were built. The Association sought but never received permission to dam the Kalamazoo River for water power for the colony.

The work in the colony kept the people busy from morning until night. The Association had many specialists: physicians, carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, shoemakers,

wagonmakers, newspaper editors and printers. All the work of the colony was divided among the members. The women performed tasks as difficult and skillful as the men. A list of some of the jobs at the colony follows, listed according to sex:¹²

<u>Male Labor</u>	<u>Female Labor</u>
Farming	Cooking
Teaming	Housework
Carpentry	Tailoring
Joinery	Dressmaking
Blacksmithing	Common Sewing
Shoemaking	Dairy Work
Masonry	Washing
Gardening	Ironing
Chopping	Nursing
Wagon Making	Teaching
Writing, Clerk	Straw Work
Physicians	Spinning
Agents	Weaving
Teaching	
Sawing	

The physicians set aside "two hours each day to be devoted to professional studies in order the better to prepare him for the practice of medicine in a skillful manner".¹³

Some members brought special skills or gifts to the Association. Charles Crindlander brought 5000-8000 grafts from his apple orchard to start an orchard for the colony. Mrs. John Porter donated her skill for straw bonnet-making. Nash Norton taught others to make bricks.

¹²Livingston, op. cit., 10.

¹³Ibid., 9.

In general, jobs were allocated according to desire and ability; a member could choose his work as long as he proved skillful enough to benefit the colony.

During its first two years, the Association grew and prospered. In May, 1845, a total of 300 members belonged to the Association, 188 of whom resided at the colony.¹⁴ Lyman Tubbs and E. M. Clapp appraised the brotherhood's real estate value at \$43,897.21 in 1846.¹⁵ The first year's profits amounted to \$6,248.41, an average of 39¢ per laborer. The stockholders received \$5.68 per hundred dollars of stock.¹⁶

The first marriage in the brotherhood was that of Emeline A. T. Wheelock to P. H. Whitford in October of 1845. The Reverend Asa Bushnell officiated. C. H. Bradford, the colony's poet, wrote a poem about the marriage called "The Socialist's Bride". Rev. Thorton published the poem in The Primitive Expounder. The groom is remembered for having arrived at the colony with a horse and buggy and leaving, when the colony disbanded, with a wife.

The first death occurred in 1844 when S. M. Vinton died.

Although the colony generally prospered, hard times occurred as well. During one of these times, the Association

¹⁴ Kalamazoo Gazette, January 24, 1937, 16.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶ Livingston, op. cit., 13.

lived for a long while on buckwheat cakes. Part of a poem written by C. H. Bradford expressed the brotherhood's feeling for buckwheat:

"And if perchance a luckless wight¹⁷
Should from his dinner bilk
His supper then was sure to be
Cold buckwheat-cakes and milk."¹⁸

Despite the buckwheat cakes and similar blights, the brotherhood lived in happy harmony. They worked hard, played hard, ate and slept well. They were content.

"Here, on this fertile, fair domain,
Unvexed with all the cares of gain,
In summer's heat and winter's cold,
He fed his flock and penned his fold;
His hours in cheerful labor flew,
Nor strife, nor hate, nor envy knew."¹⁹

It is often said that nothing good lasts forever, and so it was with the Alphadelphia Association. Jealousies developed; internal dissension increased. Some members left the colony, taking more with them than their share. The sick and invalid had to be supported by the labors of others. Some of those able to work refused to work their fair share. As problems increased, more members left the brotherhood, taking land as their share of stock, thereby decreasing both the labor and land of the Association.

¹⁷A wight is a human being, a person.

¹⁸Van Buren, op. cit., 370

¹⁹Ibid., 369.

Finally, on April 30, 1848, the last formal meeting of the Alphadelphia Association convened. On August 1, 1848, they met again to dispose of the deeds of the ex-members then present. They sold the remaining lands at auction to Kalamazoo County on April 13, 1849. Then, on August 11, 1857, the few Alphadelphians still living in the area met to dispose of the books of the Association. Those present witnessed this remark: "And thus ended the Alphadelphia Association".²⁰

In the years after the Association disbanded, the ex-members were often asked by outsiders questions about the brotherhood. Their replies were always the same; they would shake their heads and say "Better let that be; we don't tell tales out of school" or "We can't tell you anything about it. When we left we banished every memory of the old domain from our minds and have not wished to recall them".²¹

The records of the Association disappeared; it wasn't until 1934 that the records were found. After the death of E. B. Keith, son of Luke C. Keith, the last president of the Association, the records appeared among his belongings. A. D. P. Van Buren, a contemporary of the brotherhood, researched the colony and wrote many papers about it.

²⁰ Ibid., 371

²¹ Ibid., 371

Although the brotherhood has been dead for over a hundred years, the principles that they believed in and strove to live by still live on. Some young people today are seeking the true spirit of brotherhood by living and working together as large families in communes. They are striving to reach the same basic ideal of the Alphadelphia Association: to

"Ring out the feud of rich and poor²²
Ring in the good for all mankind."

²²Ibid., 371

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CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ALPHADELPHIA PHALANX.

THIS Association was commenced in the winter of 1843—4, principally by the exertions of Dr. H. R. Schetterly of Ann Arbor, Michigan, a disciple of Brisbane and the *Tribune*. The *Phalanx* of February 5, 1844, publishes its prospectus, from which we take the following paragraph:

"Notice is hereby given, that a Fourier industrial Association, called the Alphadelphia Phalanx, has been formed in this State, under the most flattering prospects. A constitution has been adopted and signed, and a domain selected on the Kalamazoo river, which seems to possess all the advantages that could be desired. It is extremely probable (judging from the information possessed), that only half the applicants can be received into one Association, because the number will be too great: and if such should be the case, two Associations will doubtless be formed; for such is the enthusiasm in the West that people will not suffer themselves to be disappointed."

[From the *Phalanx*, March 1, 1844.]

"THE ALPHADELPHIA ASSOCIATION.—We have received the constitution of this Association, a notice of the formation of which was contained in our last. In

most respects the constitution is similar to that of the North American Phalanx. It will be seen by the description of the domain selected, which we publish below, that the location is extremely favorable. The establishment of this Association in Michigan is but a pioneer movement, which we have no doubt will soon be followed by the formation of many others. Our friends are already numerous in that State, and the interest in Association is rapidly growing there, as it is throughout the West generally. The West, we think, will soon become the grand theater of action, and ere long Associations will spring up so rapidly that we shall scarcely be able to chronicle them. The people, the farmers and mechanics particularly, have only to understand the leading principles of our doctrines, to admire and approve of them; and it would therefore be no matter of surprise to see in a short time their general and simultaneous adoption. Indeed, the social transformation from a state of isolation with all its poverty and miseries, to a state of Association with its immense advantages and prosperity, may be much nearer and proceed more rapidly than we now imagine. The signs are many and cheering."

History and Description of the Alphadelphia Association.

"In consequence of a call of a convention published in the *Primitive Expounder*, fifty-six persons assembled in the school-house at the head of Clark's lake, on the fourteenth day of December last, from the Counties of Oakland, Wayne, Washtenaw, Genesee, Jackson, Eaton, Calhoun and Kalamazoo, in the State of Michigan; and after a laborious session of three days, from morning to midnight, adopted the skeleton of a constitution, which

was referred to a committee of three, composed of Dr. H. R. Schetterly, Rev. James Billings and Franklin Pierce, Esq., for revision and amendment. A committee consisting of Dr. Schetterly, John Curtis and William Grant, was also elected to view three places, designated by the convention as possessing the requisite qualifications for a domain. The convention then adjourned to meet again at Bellevue, Eaton County, on the third day of January, to receive the reports of said committees, to choose a domain from those reported on by the committee on location, and to revise, perfect and adopt said constitution. This adjourned convention met on the day appointed, and selected a location in the town of Comstock, Kalamazoo County, whose advantages are described by the committee on location, in the following terms :

"The Kalamazoo river, a large and beautiful stream, nine rods wide, and five feet deep in the middle, flows through the domain. The mansion and manufactories will stand on a beautiful plain, descending gradually toward the bank of the river, which is about twelve feet high. There is a spring, pouring out about a barrel of pure water per minute, half a mile from the place where the mansion and manufactories will stand. Cobble-stone more than sufficient for foundations and building a dam, and easily accessible, are found on the domain; and sand and clay, of which excellent brick have been made, are also abundant. The soil of the domain is exceedingly fertile, and of great variety, consisting of prairie, oak openings, and timbered and bottom-land along the river. About three thousand acres of it have been tendered to our Association, as stock to be appraised at the cash value, nine hundred of which are under cultiva-

tion, fit for the plow; and nearly all the remainder has been offered in exchange for other improved lands belonging to members at a distance, who wish to invest their property in our Association."

[Letter from H. R. Schetterly.]

"*Ann Arbor, May 20, 1844.*

"GENTLEMEN:—Your readers will no doubt be pleased to learn every important movement in industrial Association; and therefore I send you an account of the present condition of the Alphadelphia Association, to the organization of which all my time has been devoted since the beginning of last December.

"The Association held its first annual meeting on the second Wednesday in March, and at the close of a session of four days, during which its constitution and by-laws were perfected, and about eleven hundred persons, including children and adults, admitted to membership, adjourned to meet on the domain on the first of May. Its officers repaired immediately to the place selected last winter for the domain, and after overcoming great difficulties, secured the deeds of 2,814 acres of land, (927 of which is under cultivation), at a cost of \$32,000. This gives us perfect control over an immense water-power; and our land-debt is only \$5,776 (the greater portion of the land having been invested as stock), to be paid out of a proposed capital of \$240,000, \$14,000 of which is to be paid in cash during the summer and autumn. More land adjoining the domain has since been tendered as stock; but we have as much as we can use at present, and do not wish to increase our taxes and diminish our first annual dividend too much. It will all come in as soon as wanted. At our

last meeting the number of members was increased to upwards of 1,300, and more than one hundred applicants were rejected, because there seemed to be no end, and we became almost frightened at the number. Among our members are five mill-wrights, six machinists, furnacemen, printers, manufacturers of cloth, paper, etc., and almost every other kind of mechanics you can mention, besides farmers in abundance.

"Farming and gardening were commenced on the domain about the middle of April, and two weeks since, when I came away, there were seventy-one adult male and more than half that number of adult female laborers on the ground, and more constantly arriving. We shall not however be able to accommodate more than about 200 resident members this season.

"There is much talk about the formation of other Associations in this State (Michigan), and I am well convinced that others will be formed next winter. The fact is, men have lost all confidence in each other, and those who have studied the theory of Association, are desirous of escaping from the present hollow-hearted state of civilized society, in which fraud and heartless competition grind the more noble-minded of our citizens to the dust.

"The Alphadelphia Association will not commence building its mansion this season; but several groups have been organized to erect a two-story wooden building, five hundred and twenty-three feet long, including the wings, which will be finished the coming Fall, so as to answer for dwellings till we can build a mansion, and afterwards may be converted into a silk establishment or shops. The principal pursuit this year, besides putting up this building, will be farming and preparing for

erecting a furnace, saw-mill, machine-shop, etc. We have more than one hundred thousand feet of lumber on hand; and a saw-mill, which we took as stock, is running day and night.

"I do not see any obstacle to our future prosperity. Our farmers have plenty of wheat on the ground. We have teams, provisions, all we ought to desire on the domain; and best of all, since the location of the buildings has been decided, we are perfectly united, and have never yet had an angry discussion on any subject. We have religious meetings twice a week, and preaching at least once, and shall have schools very soon. If God be for us, of which we have sufficient evidence, who can prevail against us?

"Our domain is certainly unrivaled in its advantages in Michigan, possessing every kind of soil that can be found in the State. Our people are moral, religious, and industrious, having been actually engaged in manual labor, with few exceptions, all their days. The place where the mansion and out-houses will stand, is a most beautiful level plain, of nearly two miles in extent, that wants no grading, and can be irrigated by a constant stream of water flowing from a lake. Between it and the river is another plain, twelve feet lower, on which our manufactories may be set in any desirable position. Our mill-race is half dug by nature, and can be finished, according to the estimate of the State engineer, for eighteen hundred dollars, giving five and a-half feet fall without a dam, which may be raised by a grant from the Legislature, adding three feet more, and affording water-power sufficient to drive fifty pair of mill-stones. A very large spring, brought nearly a mile in pipes, will rise nearly fifty feet at our mansion. The

Central railroad runs across our domain. We have a great abundance of first-rate timber, and land as rich as any in the State.

"Our constitution is liberal, and secures the fullest individual freedom and independence. While capital is fully protected in its rights and guaranteed in its interests, it is not allowed to exercise an undue control, or in the least degree encroach on personal liberty, even if this too common tendency could possibly manifest itself in Association. As we proceed I will inform you of our progress.

H. R. SCHETTERLY."

The *Harbinger* of January 17, 1846, mentions the Alphadelphia as still existing and in hopeful condition; but we find no further notice of it in that quarter. Macdonald tells the following story of its fortunes and failure, the substance of which he obtained from Dr. Schetterly:

"At the commencement a disagreement took place between a Mr. Tubbs and the rest of the members. Mr. Tubbs wanted to have the buildings located on the land he had owned; but the Association would not agree to that, because the digging of a mill-race on the side of the river proposed by Mr. Tubbs would have cost nearly \$18,000; whereas on the railroad side of the river, which was supposed to be a much better building-place, the race would have cost only \$1,800. The consequence was that all but Mr. Tubbs voted for the railroad side, and Mr. Tubbs left, no doubt in disgust, at the same time cautioning every person against investing property in the Phalanx. This disagreement at the commencement of the experiment threw a damper on it, from which it never entirely recovered.

"There were a number of ordinary farm-houses on the domain, and a beginning of a Phalanstery seventy feet long was erected to accommodate those who resided there the first winter. The rooms were comfortable but small. A large frame-house was also begun. During the warm weather a number of persons lived in a large board shanty.

"The members of the Association were mostly farmers, though there were builders, shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths and printers, and one editor; all tolerably skillful and generally well informed; though but few could write for the paper called the *Tocsin*, which was published there. The morality of the members is said to have been good, with one exception. A school was carried on part of the time, and they had an exchange of some seventy periodicals and newspapers. No religious tests were required in the admission of members. They had preaching by one of the printers, or by any person who came along, without asking about his creed.

"All lived in clover so long as a ton of sugar or any other such luxury lasted; but before provisions could be raised, these luxuries were all consumed, and most of the members had to subsist afterward on coarser fare than they were accustomed to. No money was paid in, and the members who owned property abroad could not sell it. The officers made bad bargains in selling some farms that lay outside the domain. Laborers became discouraged and some left; but many held on longer than they otherwise would have done, because a hundred acres of beautiful wheat greeted them in the fields. In the winter some of the influential members went away temporarily, and thus left the real friends of the Associ-

ation in the minority ; and when they returned after two or three months absence, every thing was turned up-side-down. There was a manifest lack of good management and foresight. The old settlers accused the majority of this, and were themselves elected officers ; but it appears that they managed no better, and finally broke up the concern."

SHAFTER PIONEER CEMETERY

THE GHOST OF GALESBURG

By Mrs. Charles M. (Paula) Waddle

Galesburg, Mich.

from

Michigan Heritage, v. III, No. 1 Autumn 1961
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Some of Comstock Township's earliest pioneers rest in a private cemetery in Section 13, on the east side of north S Shafter road, just west of Galesburg. This cemetery occupies one-half acre near the center of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$, on a farm now owned by the writer and her husband. When we purchased the farm in 1947 we did not know that the old neglected orchard was actually a pioneer cemetery where the ancient apple trees and mock orange shrubs bloom each year with a springtime renaissance symbolic of the continuity of all living things. The old stones were so overgrown with vines that they were not discovered for some time. The natural fruit of the old apple trees make a superior jelly which we call "graveyard jelly."

Here lie buried members of the Alphadelphiama, one of several organizations established in the North in the early 1800's, which practiced communal living. The group located on land which is now a part of the Kalamazoo County Farm, just west of Galesburg. The experiment failed because - to quote the old record: "There were too many large families, poor and hungry, who could do no work, or were incapable of supporting themselves, and got among us, and were a continual expense - a hole in the meal bag, from first to last, to the Association."

The cemetery which is located on the land grant of

Matthias Sumner, father of Eliza Shafter, was the burial ground of the Shafter and Sumner families who came from Eindham County, Vermont. Hugh M. Shafter arrived in May 1833 and entered 200 acres. He purchased the land, built a house, and plowed 40 acres, then went back to Vermont and returned in the fall of 1834 with his bride, Eliza (Sumner) Shafter. They were the parents of General William Rufus Shafter, Commander of all American troops at the Battle of Santiago, in the Spanish-American War. Captain Job H. Aldrich who fell at the Battle of Nashville, during the Civil War, rests in this cemetery, as he was a boyhood friend of General Shafter. The last burial as indicated by the stones that are decipherable, is that of Harriet E. Sumner, in May 1891.

At the foot if a huge hickory tree is a stone inscribed simply, "Mabel B., daughter of E. and N.B. Shafter, died July 28, 1879, aged 19 years and 4 days." In life, Mabel was friendly and attractive, with long, raven hair and in death she has become known as the "Ghost of Galesburg," as there are those who firmly believe that she revisits the scenes of her youth cut short by an untimely death. A resident of the area who lives in an old house in which Mabel frequently visited during her lifetime, awoke one night, several years ago, to discover a lovely young girl, with long black tresses, dressed in a costume of the 1870's, sitting in a chair in the bedroom. The figure neither moved nor spoke, but the moonlight streamed across the room, making possible no mistake. The observer related the incident to an old-time Galesburg resident who said: "That must be the girl buried on the hill, who was engaged to that violinist who became famous after her death."

That is the story of the "Ghost of Galesburg." The fact re-

mains that the violinist was a real person who did visit her grave in the little cemetery, for many years after her death, and when the weather was fair he would play his violin, and on clear, still days the music could be heard in Galesburg.

INSCRIPTIONS

- SHAFTER H(ugh) M. Shafter died April 27, 1882, ae 66 years.
Eliza, wife of H.M. Shafter died February 24, 1864,
ae 48. (Eliza was b. in 1816 and passed away 18
years before her husband, H.M. Shafter.)
- SUMNER Sarah, wife of Mathias Sumner, died October 23, 1840,
ae 66 years. (Mother of Eliza Shafter)
Sarah Ann, dau.of Mathias and Sarah Sumner, died
July 2, 1835. (Died while teaching school at
Comstock)
- SHAFTER Ann Eliza, dau of H.M. , and E. Shafter, Died April
12, 1889. Lived 51 years.
- NO NAME Died April 27, 1882, aged 66 years. (This marker
is near Eliza's grave)
- ALDRICH Captain Job. H. Aldrich. In memory of one who fell
at the Battle of Nashville. Masonic insignia. (13th
U.S. Infantry)
- SHAFTER Mabel B., dau. of E. and N.B. Shafter, died July
28, 1879 ae 19 years, 10 months and 4 days.
Sarah Ann, dau. of N.M. and E. Shafter, died July
22, 1835, ae 16 years
- KEITH Minervam wife of C.L. Keith, died August 29, 1843,
aged 29 years, 8 months and 19 days.
Foot stone - W. W. K.
- SUMNER Harriet E. October 1814 - May 1891
Ovid M. August 1831 - March 1884

Serious visitors, relatives of the dead and students of
Galesburg history are always welcome to visit the little cemetery
where lie buried some of Comstock's pioneers, and where grow the
apples for the "graveyard jell."

